



EmployeeUPDATE

Our Mission: The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with its partners, protects the health and safety of all North Carolinians and provides essential human services.

A monthly publication for employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Secretary Cansler holds second DHHS Excels Webcast

Secretary Lanier Cansler held his second in a series of conversational Webcasts to lay out his vision for DHHS Excels to the Department's employees on Aug. 12.

He focused on Vision and Mission statements for the Department, and then provided details on the primary values at the core of the initiative, the impact of operating with a smaller budget, and the importance of employee loyalty to the Department.

He elaborated on the five values that DHHS Excels has identified that employees must embrace to see the Department through the coming years: customer-focused; anticipatory; collaborative; transparent and results-oriented.



Ruth Jennings, left, with Secretary Cansler, Vontricia Smith and Gary Cyrus.

— Photo by Jim Jones

To demonstrate the importance of being customer focused, he highlighted the job performances of three DHHS

employees, all of whose work epitomizes the value of being customer focused.

They are Vontricia Smith from the Division of Social Services; Gary Cyrus from the Division of Aging and Adult Services; and Ruth Jennings from the Division of Medical Assistance. All three shared stories about how they take extra steps to serve their customers, the people of North Carolina.

Vontricia Smith is a receptionist for DSS where she handles a lot of customer calls about child support and Social Security. By the time a caller has reached her telephone, “they’re already frustrated, so I try to lead and guide them the best that I can.

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If I don't know the answer, I get the answer for them." Smith was nominated by her director for the prompt and professional manner in which she deals with different callers every day; she has been with the state for 7.5 years.

Gary Cyrus has been with DHHS for 24 years and with state government for 32. He is a business officer in the DAAS Planning and Budget Section. He was recently presented the Jane Kennedy Excellence in Aging Award by the Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging. During the years, Gary has worked with them in grants, grant management and budgetary issues.

The Division of Medical Assistance was proud to learn that Ruth Jennings received a public commendation via the "Tell Us What We Are Doing Right" form on the N.C. Care Link. Ruth is a physical therapy consultant at DMA Clinical Policy, Pharmacy and Ancillary Services. Ruth was surprised to learn that she had been described as a "true diamond level gem and a truly dedicated public servant." The writer added: "Way to go Ruth Jennings." Prior to joining state government, Ruth worked in the medical field.

During the Webcast, the secretary provided a glimpse into the future of the Department's budget, and how DHHS Excels will help prepare all employees and work sections to perform at higher levels required to meet the needs of our projected population growth, while operating with a smaller budget.

Additionally, there is the possibility that over the next five years, 40 percent of the DHHS workforce will be eligible for retirement. These challenges will require a Department that is prepared to meet them. DHHS Excels will help to prepare DHHS for those challenges.

In response to a question submitted via the DHHS Excels comment line, Cansler said that DHHS Excels is an attitude. Adapting the values does not require an action plan. He encouraged all employees to review the five values in their daily work. Ask such questions as: Am I being truly collaborative? What is the best decision I can make for the customer? What will tomorrow bring and how must I adapt? Just by thinking every day of our values, we can start implementing the change.

Running through the five values – Customer-Focused, Anticipatory, Collaborative, Transparent and Results-Oriented – he stated, "If we achieve these ...we can succeed through all the changes we're going through. But we have to focus on how we make the changes and how we operate, keeping these things in mind."

He thanked Deputy Secretary Maria Spaulding who is leading a series of DHHS Excels Outreach meetings across the state, and encouraged employees to attend the remaining sessions. And, he thanked the numerous employees who are participating in the many work groups that are involved in DHHS Excels.

A new DHHS Web page provides updated information about DHHS Excels, including links to the entire Webcast of Aug. 12, past newsletter articles, an e-mail address for your questions and comments, and a Power Point presentation. A link to the new Web page now is on the Department home page. ■

– Jim Jones, DHHS Public Affairs

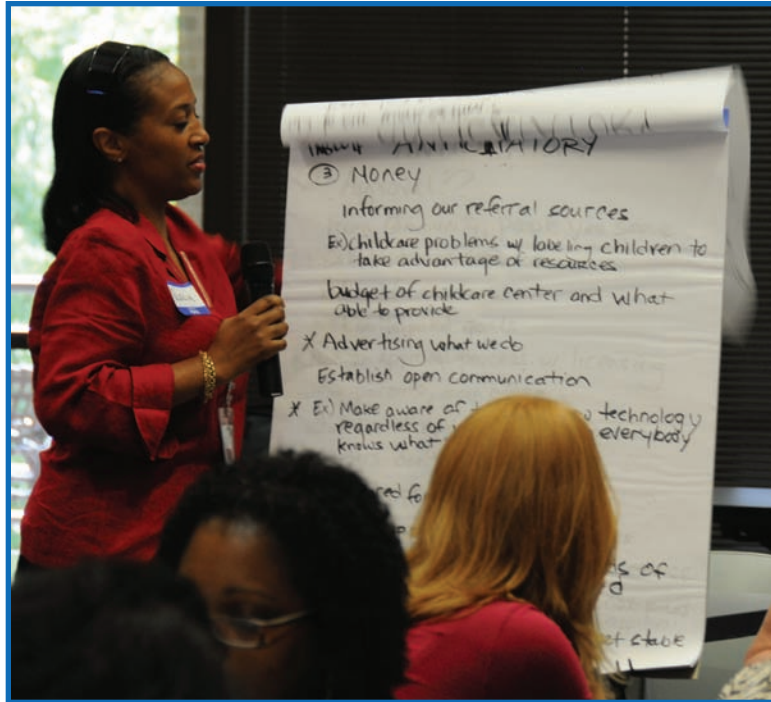
DHHS Excels Outreach Sessions generate discussions

Deputy Secretary Maria Spaulding and the DHHS Excels Outreach Team are halfway through the 10 outreach sessions scheduled for August and September.

Sessions have occurred in Raleigh, Charlotte, Greenville and Wilmington. By September 10 the first round of Outreach sessions will have also been held in Morganton, Asheville and Greenville.

In evaluations submitted after each session, attendees agree that they gained a better understanding of DHHS Excels and the values discussed; that there was equal participation in the small work group discussions; and that they would recommend co-workers attend such a session if possible.

It is the goal of the Outreach Planning Group that each meeting achieve an attendance of 100 employees so that by the conclusion of the first round, 1,000 employees will have been personally introduced to DHHS Excels and will have had the opportunity to provide feedback on the new values. Comments from the session workgroups are being synthesized so that they can be shared with those working on implementing the new values and with members of the DHHS Excels Steering committee.



Felicia Perry, top, staff development coordinator with DHHS Human Resources, presents ideas from her group's discussion while Deputy Secretary Maria Spaulding, below, facilitates.

– Photos by Jim Jones, DHHS Public Affairs

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Excels Outreach Sessions, continued from page 3



Some comments on the valuation sheet include:

- This is a positive initiative that will help morale and improve service delivery.
- Good combination of lecture and group involvement.
- Employees won't change if managers don't.
- Thanks for asking our suggestions.
- Hold all employees accountable for exhibiting values and meeting the goals & expectations.
- Great idea to keep all employees on the same page.
- When I conduct training I plan to incorporate these values and this initiative into presentations with both internal and external customers.
- I will encourage co-workers to watch the webcast, look at the website and I will share handouts at staff meetings.



Deputy Secretary Maria Spaulding, top, speaks to group in Wake County during DHHS Excels Outreach session on Aug. 10. Below, John Lail, standing back left, section chief for budget and property in the Property and Construction Section, assists as Lois Nilsen, DHHS Web Content Manager, presents summary of small work group discussion.

Next steps for the Outreach Committee include sessions at our facilities during September and October; later sessions will be planned with DHHS stakeholders.

If you have not heard about these meetings in your area, ask your supervisor for more information. ■

– Sandra K. Trivett, Special Projects Office

DHHS Leadership V graduates 22



Graduates of LeadershipDHHS V

Secretary Lanier Cansler presented graduation certificates on Aug. 6 to the 22 graduates of LeadershipDHHS V. The class included representatives from 11 different agencies of the department.

In every class, participants are divided into teams to identify and work on projects which are presented at graduation. This year's teams prepared table top displays which allowed guests to visit each table and discuss project objectives and team interaction with the members of each team.

Project topics included: DHHS Excels: Cultivating Collaborative Competencies...Sustaining and Strengthening Services; Brooks Brothers to Belly Rings: Four Generations in the Work Place; DHHS Cares: An Open Window for Volunteer Opportunities & Resources; and DHHS Excels When Each Employee Is Empowered and Valued:

Practical Strategies for Being Effective Leaders & Managers.

During his remarks, Cansler commended the graduates for their commitment to the extra work and time required by LeadershipDHHS. He recalled the first meeting of the class when he spoke to them about DHHS Excels. "LeadershipDHHS helps achieve the goals of DHHSExcels because it helps bring down silos and build cross-divisional collaborations," he said.

Using an analogy from The Wizard of Oz, he told graduates and guests that "we are not in Kansas any more," and we must develop new approaches to work to meet the expectations of the DHHS of the future.

The graduates and their work sections are: Verna Best, Office of Economic Opportunity; Julie Bloomingdale, Avis Chandler, Felicia Fluid and Re-

becca Parks, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Tim Wilson and Craig Whittaker, DVRS/Disability Determination Services; Dawn Cambridge, Division of Social Services; Amaka Flynn, Division of Medical Assistance; Julia Hairr and Priscilla Roberts, Office of the Controller; John Harris and Mary Tripp, Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services; Cindy Haynes-Morgan, Division of Public Health; Sharon Jordan, Office of Procurement and Contract Services; Ginny Klarman, Office of Rural Health and Community Care; Mona Mabry and Lisa Weeks, Division of Medical Assistance; Iva Jean Metcalf and Kimberly Williams-Binkley, Division of Child Development; Bernetta Thorne-Williams, Division of Health Service Regulation; Sophia Spencer, Division of Aging and Adult Services. ■

— Sandra K. Trivett,
Special Projects Office

HIT promises quality and efficiency in provision of health care

In the coming years, every North Carolinian will feel the impact of a HIT. Not the proverbial smack of a bat on a baseball, this HIT nonetheless clears the bases and marks the start of a whole new inning for health care in our state.

Health Information Technology, or HIT, is the new game in town and North Carolina is stepping up to the plate.

Secretary Lanier Cansler has charged the Office of Health Information Technology with using the latest HIT advances to help guide and direct DHHS's efforts to maximize its financial and medical resources.

We will use HIT to help deliver the highest quality and quantity of care to all North Carolinians and, by doing so, help change the way health care is delivered. We believe it will help increase quality of care, improve health, control costs, and help to empower health care consumers by giving them the critical information in an easy to understand format in order to help them chart their own course of health care options.

In the coming months, we will regularly brief you on the activities and progress of HIT efforts. In the meantime, let me briefly share what has been undertaken to date.

Health Information Exchange – The newly organized N.C. HIE non-profit Board and associated Workgroups have

been hard at work developing the N.C. HIE Operational Plan. This will be the first full draft of the Operational Plan, which is posted on the website: www.healthIT.nc.gov. The final Strategic and Operational plan will be submitted to the Office of the National Coordinator of HIT by Aug. 31.

Regional Extension Center – With the leadership of the N.C. Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), the state is making excellent progress on identifying and recruiting targeted primary care practices interested in adopting Electronic Health Records (EHR) in their practices. More than 1,000 eligible providers are already enrolled with approximately 30 new applications coming in each week. For more information go to: www.ahecqualitysource.com

Medicaid Incentive Payment System (MIPS) – The N.C. Division of Medical Assistance is operating under a Planning-Advance Planning Document

grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to plan and implement a system to pay eligible providers and hospitals for successfully adopting, implementing, or upgrading EHR's in their practice. N.C. Medicaid was selected to be the first state in the nation to build and test the necessary interfaces with the National Level Repository (NLR) at CMS. Every state and every provider who will receive incentive payments will be required to register with the NLR. For more information and a list of Frequently Asked Questions go to: www.nctracks.nc.gov/provider/forms/index_hit

As we continue to develop our HIT strategies and goals, we will keep you informed through the newsletter. Please also visit our website for the latest information on HIT -: www.healthIT.nc.gov. ■



A periodic report on the progress of HIT in North Carolina, from Dr. Steve Cline.

Don't forget your flu vaccine!

The N.C. Division of Public Health joins the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in urging everyone to make flu vaccination a priority this season.

Unlike last year, vaccine is plentiful, available and not restricted to particular age groups. Everyone over the age of six months is encouraged to be immunized.

“Our challenge with H1N1 vaccine was getting it in time to beat the first big wave of illness,” said N.C. Health Director Dr. Jeffrey Engel. “This year, manufacturers are ahead of the curve, giving us plenty of time to get folks adequately protected for flu season.”

This year's seasonal flu vaccine, available as an injection and as a nasal spray formula, is already arriving at pharmacies, doctors' offices and local health departments across the state. The vaccine includes protection against the H1N1 strain of the virus as well as two other anticipated flu strains. For most people, that means only one flu immunization is necessary. As usual, children under nine years of age who haven't been vaccinated against the flu in the past will need two doses of flu vaccine.

For DHHS employees, check with your human resources office to find out if flu shots will be offered at your workplace. And look for this year's updated www.flu.nc.gov website to launch later this month. ■



In addition to vaccination, the N.C. Division of Public Health encourages you to continue practicing good health habits to protect yourself from flu viruses:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Stay home if you are sick. You should stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities. Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

– Julie Henry, DHHS Public Affairs

2010 State Employees Combined Campaign

Dear DHHS Employees,

It's the time of year that you can expect a cheerful colleague to approach you about participating in the 2010 State Employees Combined Campaign. As you may know the combined campaign was created in 1984 through Executive Order as a method of strengthening and sustaining North Carolina communities and citizens.

The Campaign assures state employees and retirees continuous opportunity to support charitable organizations that are accountable, fiscally sound and committed to improving the quality of life in our state, nation and the world.

Over the next several weeks each of us will have an opportunity to pledge our monetary support. You have several options ranging from payroll deduction to fundraising events to writing a personal check. Whichever you choose, I'd like to sincerely thank you for your support in giving. Last year state employees contributed more than \$4.7 million to non profits helping thousands of North Carolinians.

We all know the national and state economies have become a challenge for all, which also means more families are in need of assistance. Even if your level of giving has changed, we encourage you to continue to contribute, because together we can make a difference!

Sincerely,



Lanier Cansler

**DHHS Combined Campaign Kick-off event
Sept. 15, Haywood Gym, Dix Campus
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Receives national 'Hero's' award from Sam's Club

ADA celebrates 20 years; Brandon Boswell celebrates life

Brandon Boswell may seem an unlikely hero to some. His recognition as such is not for saving a life, but rather for the example he sets in the way he lives his own.

Brandon was honored July 21 by Sam's Club top executives at a luncheon at the warehouse retailer's Arkansas headquarters. He was presented the Sam Walton Hero Award for recognition of his service, compassion and advocacy for people with disabilities.

He was recognized during the employee-focused celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The event was held at the corporate offices in Bentonville, Ark. As Brandon tells it, his recognition was focused on his role as an associate of Sam's Club.

Brandon started his employment at the Jacksonville, N.C., warehouse membership club as a product demonstrator. Although he is vision impaired – defined as an individual who is legally blind – he is more than capable of holding the floor most anywhere. His ease with speaking is boosted by the three books he has self-published on Christian humor.

Upon receiving the Sam's Club award he made a few comments. "I told the audience I was honored to receive the



Brandon Boswell

award, and that I was proud to work for a company that chooses not to focus on all the things I can't do because I am disabled, but instead, they choose to focus on the things I can do despite having a disability."

The recognition from his employer is the culmination of several months of corporate attention, Brandon says. He spoke last October to fellow employees in Jacksonville about being an employee with a disability. "I must have spoken for 20 minutes. I got a good

reception," he said. "I mixed in a few jokes."

A corporate video crew arrived at the store last May "to interview me and to talk to my coworkers, basically talk about that despite my being disabled, I still work hard and serve an important function in the store," he said.

Brandon's ability to communicate and put fellow employees at ease led to an invitation from his employer's corporate offices to visit San Francisco and some of the touchstones of the ADA movement going back more than 30 years. Brandon went. He was accompanied by his store manager, Scott Williams, and by Kim Joyner, his rehabilitation counselor who works out of the Wilmington District Office for the Division of Services for the Blind.

"I've been a rehabilitation counselor for 22 years, and this has never happened before, Joyner said. "It was a lot of work and traveling, and it was wonderful."

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**Brandon Boswell celebrates life,
continued from page 9**

Following the California and Arkansas trips, his employer flew him and his counselor in August to Orlando, Fla., where Brandon spoke to an annual meeting of store managers while the retailer observed the 20th anniversary of ADA with a celebration of the year of inclusion of people with disabilities.

“He spoke to three different groups of managers about what it is like to work with a disability,” Joyner said. “And he shone! He said, ‘Just give us a chance. We have a lot to offer.’”

Brandon is back on the job after all the attention and is in training for a new position at the Jacksonville store. He is preparing to be an attendant at outdoor fuel pumps, and he also will be encouraging new memberships in the merchandising chain.

“I am positive that not only Sam's Club, but other employers as well will in some way be positively impacted by their exposure to Brandon and information about the world of persons with disability,” Joyner said. “I think more of our consumers will be hired in the future . . . because their eyes will have seen disability in a brand new light. ■

— Jim Jones, DHHS Public Affairs

BUILDING
A LIVABLE AND
SENIOR-FRIENDLY
NORTH CAROLINA
DRAFTING A PLAN

GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON AGING

Living Wise and Aging Well

October 13-15, 2010
Sheraton Imperial Hotel, Durham NC
Preprogram and Registration

UNC
Institute on Aging

THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
1776

daas
NORTH CAROLINA
Division of Aging
and Adult Services

N.C. Sickle Cell Program receives CDC grant for registry

North Carolina has long had a strong commitment to sickle cell, thalassemia and other blood disorders. Established by the General Assembly in 1973, the North Carolina Sickle Cell Syndrome program continues to make advances in treatment, research, services and resources to improve the lives of people statewide who are living with sickle cell disease.



Poster child Shadonna Spencer, 11-year-old daughter of Ruby B. White of Elizabeth City, poses with Lizette Butts, educator counselor with the N.C. Sickle Cell Program.

North Carolina recently was named one of six states to receive a two-year grant award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a Registry and Surveillance System in Hemoglobinopathies (RUSH) for North Carolinians with sickle cell disease, thalassemia, hemoglobin E and other genetic blood disorders.

The N.C. Sickle Cell Syndrome program provides services to and coordinates care for thousands of clients with sickle cell disease and other blood disorders. However, there are thousands more suffering with chronic blood disorders that are not being served. The RUSH grant will assist in developing best practices around education, policy, guideline and data systems. Once in place, the registry will provide the state the opportunity to enhance statewide partnerships across the Division of Public Health, community-based organizations, key medical institutions and

the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Sickle cell was discovered in the United States in 1910. While the past 100 years have brought significant medical advancements in treatment, diagnosis and research into sickle cell and other blood disorders, there is still no cure. As we mark this centennial, the North Carolina Sickle Cell Syndrome program is excited about its newest endeavor to improve the quality of care for patients living with blood disorders. ■

N.C. SICKLE CELL ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

Honoring the Past, Trailblazing to the Cure 2010 Conference
Raleigh – Sept. 16-17
North Carolina Sickle Cell Syndrome Program

Sickle Cell Symposium
East Carolina University – Sept. 17

40th Anniversary Gala
Piedmont Health Interventions and Sickle Cell Agency – Sept. 18

100 Years, 100 Facts, 100 Faces Celebration
UNC-Chapel Hill – Oct. 25-29

– Nicole Gye'Nyame, Sickle Cell Program N.C.

Assistive Technology Expo Nov. 18-19

The 20th annual N.C. Assistive Technology Expo will be held Nov. 18-19 at the North Raleigh Hilton.

This two-day conference provides information and hands-on access to state-of-the-art assistive technology. These tools empower people with disabilities to live independently, work, participate in educational opportunities and access their communities.

Assistive technology devices include low-tech items such as kitchen gadgets to high-tech, computer-based environmental control systems. The Exhibit Hall will be open on Nov. 18 and is free and open to the public. AT Expo is co-sponsored by the Assistive Technology Program. NCATP is in the N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Brian Frasure is the keynote speaker. He was a student at N.C. State University when he was involved in an accident with a train that resulted in the loss of his leg. Brian is a certified prosthetist and paralympic record holder. He leads bionic workshops to teach individuals to walk with their prosthesis and to integrate body and mind.

For More Information:
N.C. Assistive Technology Program
919-850-2787. ■

